

Article #1449 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Log Walls

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Is there anything special to enter in REScheck when using log structure wood walls?

REScheck has a drop down list of log walls to choose from. The log choices are based on nominal thickness in inches ranging from 5" to 16". If one of the log wall choices does not match your log wall assembly, you can choose "other" as your assembly type from the drop down list and enter the overall u-factor of the log wall.

For log home packages do I take the R-value per inch of log times thickness? For instance cedar is 1.41 per inch x 5.5 = 7.75 R-value.

In REScheck the log wall choices in the drop down list assume a thermal resistance r-value per inch range of 1.1-1.3 plus 0.85 for film resistance. A wood density range of 1.7 lb/ft³ at 12% moisture content for west coast wood and cedar to 41.2 lb/ft³ for southern pine and a specific heat of 0.39 Btu/lb degree F at 12% moisture content. The log choices are based on nominal thickness in inches ranging from 5" to 16". If one of the log wall choices does not match your log wall assembly, you can choose "other" as your assembly type from the drop down list and enter the overall u-factor of the log wall.

Why does REScheck not allow Mass Wall Credit for anything less than a 7 inch log wall?

The MEC and IECC include a mass wall credit for walls having a heat capacity greater than or equal to 6 Btu/ft² degree F. The code states that, "Solid wood walls having a mass greater than or equal to 20 lb/ft² have heat capacities equal to or exceeding 6 Btu/ft² degree F." According to the data in Table A.20 of the document titled, "[Methodology for Developing the REScheck Software through Version 3.6 \(pdf, 1.2 MB\)](#)", 5 inch and 6 inch log walls do not meet these criteria, with the heat capacity given just at the lower boundary but the weight falling below 20 lb/ft².

We are currently working on updating the log wall assembly options in REScheck. The next release of REScheck will address the mass wall credit below a 7" log wall. Determination of the log mass wall credit will be based on the new consensus process in the ICC for log wall thermal calculations. The next release of the software is expected in September 2005. An email will be sent to all registered users.

Article #1450 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Energy Codes

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

How do I know if my area or state requires energy compliance?

DOE's Building Energy Codes website has the state energy code status for every state. Visit the [Status of State Energy Codes](#) web page, and click on the state in your area. The State page will display the state's applicable energy code and if our software tools are accepted for showing compliance.

Is there any problem with enforcing the 2003 IRC while still enforcing the 2000 IECC?

Yes, the 2003 IRC references the 2003 IECC not the 2000 IECC.

How do I know if I should use the prescriptive or tradeoff approach?

You should refer to the following articles for an overview of the differences between the energy code approaches.

- [Why are There So Many Approaches for Energy Code Compliance?](#)
- [About Residential Compliance](#)

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1451 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Software

This article is based on questions asked during the May *REScheck* Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Do *REScheck* Compliance Certificates need to be sealed or does a "licensed professional" need to certify and submit the compliance report to the building department?

The energy code does not require that a certified design professional sign or seal residential compliance certificates.

Is it acceptable for the HVAC contractor to perform the *REScheck* reports for the building departments?

Yes, it is acceptable for the HVAC contractor to perform the *REScheck* reports. The energy code does not require that a certified design professional sign residential compliance certificates.

Can a township require that an engineer and/or architect be the only one that can run *REScheck* and not the builder?

The township/jurisdiction and building official have the final authority of what is required for submittal and permitting.

How do you update your *REScheck* with new codes if you are running the downloaded version?

If you have registered on our website as a *REScheck* user, when a major release is posted on our website, we will send an email to all registered users informing them of the new release and features included in the new release.

When is *REScheck* updated?

The software has one or two major updates a year. The next major release is September 2005. Reminders of new releases are emailed to all registered users. If you are not a registered user and would like to receive a reminder, register on the [Building Energy Codes Program](#) website.

What are the changes from last year and this year (*REScheck*)?

The major changes in *REScheck* included incorporating compliance to the 2003 International Energy Conservation Code, Arkansas's State specific code, electronic on-line permitting capability, and several minor enhancements and bug fixes.

How can I access *REScheck* Web?

You can click the link on the homepage of the [Building Energy Codes Program](#) website or go directly to the

If you choose "Code: 2003 IECC", but I am in a "drop down" state, will the program work?

Yes, the program will work, however, if your state is listed in the drop down Code Menu, the state most likely has a "state specific code" with special amendments and should be used instead of one of the national codes for compliance.

Can a project be created in REScheck, then "imported" into REScheck-Web? Or vice versa?

Not at this time. This feature is planned for future releases of the software.

Can you import project data from another analysis program (i.e Carrier, EliteSoft, Trane)?

REScheck does not have an option for importing data from other programs.

I am interested in creating OUTPUT files from a CAD software. Are there any IMPORT avenues in REScheck? If so, what would that look like?

REScheck does not have an option for importing data. However you could save your project as a report by clicking on "Save Report" from the File Menu. Open the report in a text processor application on your desktop and resave the report with a *.txt extension or a file extension that is compatible with your cad program. Try importing the saved file into your program after resaving it or try copy and paste.

The actual compliance certificate would be displayed on your cad drawings.

What if the location of a job (city) is not listed in the pull down menu on the opening Project screen in REScheck?

If your city is not listed in the drop down selection of cities, choose the closest city listed with the most similar weather data.

Is there a method for inserting a heading on secondary pages of the report, for example: project name, date of report, etc?

This is currently not a feature of the software. However, you could save your project as a report from the File menu in the program. Open the report in any text processor and manually enter the heading for the other pages of the report.

Is there a link to the Resource Center in REScheck?

We are currently working on a future release of REScheck that will have the capability of retrieving above code and other code information from the Resource Center. This enhancement to the software should be completed and released by September.

I work with two and three story retirement residences; 100,000 square feet, 115 units that are both R-occupancy and A occupancy; do I use REScheck or COMcheck?

Multifamily buildings that are three stories or less in height and have three or more attached dwelling units would fall under the residential energy code requirements and *REScheck* could be used to show compliance depending upon the adopted energy code within your location. Multifamily buildings greater than three stories in height would fall under the commercial energy code requirements and *COMcheck-EZ* could be used to show compliance.

Multifamily buildings that are three stories or less in height and have three or more attached dwelling units would fall under the residential energy code requirements and *REScheck* could be used to show compliance depending upon the adopted energy code within your location. Multifamily buildings greater than three stories in height would fall under the commercial energy code requirements and *COMcheck-EZ* could be used to show compliance.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1452 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Walls

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

For horizontal areas and linear lengths in wall areas, do you use the interior dimension or measure to the exterior face?

The area of the wall should be measured on the exterior face from the top of the floor to the bottom of the roof. The portion of the building envelope, including opaque area and fenestration, that is vertical or tilted at an angle of 60 degrees from horizontal or greater is considered a wall.

How do you enter unusual wall types in REScheck? Examples: Envelope - straw bale, adobe, rammed earth, SIPs.

For assembly types that do not fit into any of the assemblies shown in the drop down list in REScheck, the user can choose "Other" as the assembly. If you use "Other" as the assembly type, you must enter an overall U-factor for the entire assembly (including air films). Be prepared to provide the building department with manufacturers' literature or documentation of U-factor calculations.

What if the R-value of the insulation at the rim joist is different than the value in the wall?

Input the total square footage of the rim joist area as a separate wall entry. You can also edit the component definition by double clicking on the word "wall" in the component column and change it to "rim joist".

Can I calculate all of the walls in a two story home and then enter my windows under one wall section? Does this affect the compliance or should the first floor windows be entered under the first floor wall and the 2nd floor windows under the 2nd floor wall?

If the walls are all the same construction and are all above grade, you can add all the walls together and show all of your windows under the one wall entry in REScheck. If you have different u-factors for any windows or doors, you should enter those components separately under the wall entry.

Should the area of windows and doors be taken out of the area of the walls?


No, enter the total gross area of the wall component in the *Gross Area* field. No, enter the total gross area of the wall component in the Gross Area field. The gross wall area includes the area of all windows and doors within the wall.

REScheck automatically deducts the windows and any glass doors from the total square footage of the walls and will display the window wall ratio on the compliance certificate.

Does the flange on the exterior wall insulation need to be fastened over the studs to form a continuous vapor barrier?

The IECC does not define how the insulation shall be fastened, however, there are several articles and videos explaining the proper technique for fastening the insulation to the studs. For batt insulation with flanges, the optimal technique is to fasten the flange to the face of the stud. Fastening the flange to the face of the stud allows for the full depth of insulation to be maintained as well as providing a continuous vapor barrier.

The following links offer information on this subject:

- [DOE Factsheet: Wall Insulation](#) (pdf, 765 KB) 
- [The Importance of Vapor Retarders](#)

If we have a brick veneered wall over a framed wall should we consider the R-value of the continuous air cavity between brick and frame wall as part of the wall?

The standard wall types available in the pull down menus include typical construction U-factors. The assemblies in REScheck (except the assembly called "other") have assumed U-factors for the entire assembly except for the insulation value. For example, a wood frame wall will include the R-value of interior and exterior air films, plywood siding, sheathing, and wood studs. If you choose "other" as your assembly type, you must enter the entire U-factor of the assembly and be prepared to provide the backup specifications to the building official as to how the U-factor was derived.

Are the R-values for joists, studs, etc. included or is that a number you type in the "continuous" column? If they are already included, what is the "continuous" column used for?

The assemblies in REScheck (except the assembly called "other") have assumed U-factors for the entire assembly except for the insulation value. For example, a wood frame wall will include the R-value of interior and exterior air films, plywood siding, sheathing, and wood studs. If you choose "other" as your assembly type, you must enter the entire U-factor of the assembly and be prepared to provide the backup specifications to the building official as to how the U-factor was derived.

The Continuous Column in REScheck is used for insulation installed continuously over structural members and is typically rigid foam board or insulated sheathing.

Continuous Insulation (CI)

Insulation that runs continuously over structural members and is free of significant thermal bridging; such as rigid foam insulation above the ceiling deck. It is installed on the interior, exterior, or is integral to any opaque surface of the building envelope.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Insulation Overview](#)

Does the type of exterior sheathing need to be noted or play any role?

If no insulated sheathing is entered (entered in the software as continuous insulation), the sheathing is assumed to be plywood with an R-value of 0.83. If insulated sheathing is used, only 80% of the net wall is assumed to be covered by the insulating sheathing. The other 20% is assumed to be covered with plywood (R-value = 0.83).

If you choose "other" as the assembly type, you must enter the U-factor of the entire assembly and be prepared to provide the backup specifications to the building official as to how the U-factor was derived.

If you add thermal sheathing do you enter this to the continuous insulation next to the cavity selection?

Yes, you would enter the value in the continuous insulation column. Keep in mind, the assemblies listed in *REScheck* already have a default value added for standard sheathing (depending on the assembly component). If no sheathing is indicated by the user, the sheathing is assumed to be plywood with an R-value of 0.83. If insulating sheathing is used, only 80% of the net wall is assumed to be covered by the insulating sheathing. The other 20% is assumed to be covered with plywood.

How can I get an R-value of 21 in a 2x4 cavity exterior wall?

The following three systems are equal to achieve an approximate R-21:

1. use 2x4 wall with R-11 batt and R-7 rigid board insulation
2. use 2x4 wall with R-13 batt and R-6 rigid board insulation
3. use 2x4 wall with R-15 batt and R-5 rigid board insulation

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Insulation Options](#)

Can one use cavity insulation in conjunction with continuous on ceiling and or walls?

Yes, insulation to be installed between furring or studs is entered in the Cavity R-Value column. If the installed wall insulation will be continuous (such as with exterior rigid insulation or interior "draped" insulation), the insulation R-value is entered in the Continuous R-Value column. A combination of insulation systems may be used. For example, installing R-13 batt insulation between the studs and R-5 rigid insulation on the exterior of the stud wall.

Cavity insulation is insulation installed in the cavities between structural members, such as wood studs, metal framing, and Z-clips. Continuous insulation runs continuously over structural members and is typically rigid foam board. Cavity insulation is affected by thermal bridging, while continuous insulation reduces thermal bridges.

Article #1453 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- HVAC

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Do I get added credit for advanced HVAC systems such as ground source heatpumps?

REScheck does not allow tradeoffs for ground source heat pumps, forced hot water, and some other systems in the Mechanical folder. The software does allow tradeoffs with air source heat pumps, fossil fuel furnaces, boilers, and air conditioners.

REScheck makes only the most common equipment types available for tradeoff (those types which are covered by Federal appliance standards and are rated with an AFUE, SEER, or HSPF). Other systems such as radiant floors, geothermal heat pumps, evaporative coolers, and others require complex calculations not available in REScheck. These systems can receive tradeoff credit only through a whole-house performance (i.e., Chapter 4) analysis.

The following links offer additional information on this subject:

- [Why is my Mechanical Equipment not Available in the REScheck Software?](#)
- [What Should I Do if my Mechanical Equipment is Not an Option in the REScheck Software?](#)

Does the compliance report tell you the heat loss of the building? What about cooling load?

No, because infiltration, duct loss, internal gains, and solar gains are not used in calculating compliance.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Does REScheck Take Air Infiltration into Consideration?](#)

Does the code require a high efficiency furnace? I noticed the example showed 78% efficiency.

No, the code does not require a high efficiency furnace. The code does require the furnace meet the minimum efficiency mandated by NAECA which has a 78% efficiency rating.

How do you account for different mechanical equipment types such as split system, RTU etc?

The efficiency tables in the energy code define both split, packaged, and other systems. For systems not shown in the residential sections of the code, the code refers you to the commercial mechanical section.

Can we use lower R-values than required of duct insulation with higher SEER ratings?

There is no tradeoff allowed for duct insulation, therefore, regardless of the SEER rating, the minimum amount of duct insulation dependent upon project location will be required.

If you have a 2 story home and you use a 90% efficient unit on the first floor and use an 80% on the 2nd floor, does REScheck calculate on both systems or does it use only one?

You can enter multiple HVAC systems in REScheck, however, credit towards the building envelope will be taken from the least efficient unit entered in the Mechanical folder.

On a house with an unconditioned basement, can you trade a 90% furnace in the basement for insulation in the attic ceiling?

REScheck does perform equipment efficiency tradeoffs towards the conditioned building envelope, regardless of where the HVAC is installed (unconditioned or conditioned basement). If the system has a higher rating than the minimum efficiencies shown in the code, the building envelope will receive credit towards compliance.

If you do not have heating and cooling vents in the basement and therefore "render" the basement unconditioned, must you then insulate the ducts?

Yes, duct insulation would be required for ducts in unconditioned spaces. The minimum R-value of insulation on the ducts depends upon the location of your project based on heating degree days.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Does the Energy Code Allow an Unvented Crawlspace?](#)

Does the residential pipe insulation requirement still apply when the pipes are on the inside of the conditioned building envelope?

For automatic circulating hot water systems, insulation is required regardless of installation location. Minimum pipe insulation thickness is dependent upon the service water heating temperature and pipe size. Other piping in the conditioned space typically does not require insulation.

When is the minimum SEER rating going to change?

The minimum SEER rating will change from a SEER 10 to SEER 13 in January 2006.

Article #1454 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Appliances

This article is based on questions asked during the May *REScheck* Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Non typical equipment such as direct-fired gas appliances, small gas-fired, or direct-vent systems; how do I assign a COP or SEER to appliances not typical?

REScheck does not have the option for entering appliances. If you are installing a system that is not handled in *REScheck*, you should do three things to help your code official.

1. Make a note in the Project folder that gives your mechanical system and/or appliances specifics.
2. Attach documents to your *REScheck* compliance report that provide information about equipment type, efficiency, installation, and sizing.
3. Meet the appropriate requirements for the mechanical code in your area.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[What Should I Do if my Mechanical Equipment is Not an Option in the REScheck Software?](#)

The IRC code now requires combustion air openings, high and low in areas of appliance, including attics. How does this apply to *REScheck*?

REScheck does not show compliance to the IRC. *REScheck* can be used to show compliance to the IECC for the exterior building envelope that separates conditioned from unconditioned spaces. Therefore, the inside walls of a room with combustion appliances that are vented to the exterior must be insulated to the exterior wall requirements.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1455 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Garages

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Should a heated garage be included in the calculation? How about if the heater is only to maintain a temperature slightly above the outside temperature?

If the garage has a peak design rate of energy usage less than 3.4 Btu/h per square foot or 1.0 watt per square foot of floor area for space conditioning purposes, the garage would not be considered part of the conditioned building envelope. If the garage is being heated by the system used for the home at a peak design rate greater than 3.4 Btu/h per square foot, unless the garage is zoned separately, the garage would be considered part of the conditioned building envelope. A separate system heating the garage would require determining the energy usage to determine whether the garage would be considered part of the building envelope.

Are spaces over garage areas considered conditioned areas? What about carports?

If you have a room above a garage that is conditioned, the garage ceiling would be considered part of the conditioned building envelope (floor over unconditioned space) and would need to be insulated and sealed according to code.

Occupied living space over a carport would be required to meet the applicable energy code requirements for a conditioned space. The floor of the living space over the carport would be defined as a floor over outside air.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1456 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Roof and Ceiling

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Is there a distinction between roof area and ceiling area? Roof area is usually larger, but conditioned space only connects to attic through ceiling area, not roof.

The ceiling area should be measured on the slope of the finished interior surface.


What area do you use for a scissor truss, the foot print or the area insulated?

The ceiling area should be measured on the slope of the finished interior surface.

We use R-11 batts between the roof trusses and then blow in R-19 on top of that; can I show this as R-11 in cavity and the R-19 is continuous value?

The total R-value should be entered as cavity. The software automatically calculates insulation that is assumed to be over the trusses and treat as continuous.

How do you measure the bevel along the insulation, the lower or upper part of the angle?

In the case of the ceiling, REScheck accounts for the bevel in the calculations and thus you would enter the full called out R-value of the insulation. For details on the calculations used, refer to our [Methodology for Developing the REScheck Software through Version 3.6](#) (pdf, 1.2 MB)  Document.

On attic trusses, do you use wall insulation or roof insulation on the vertical part of the truss?

Use roof insulation; the wall stops at the top plate.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1457 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Basement

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

When do you ignore the edge of a basement slab with a footing 12 inches or more below grade?

For slabs with a top edge above finished grade or 12 inches or less below finished grade, the IRC requires the insulation R-value to be applied to the outside of the foundation or the inside of the foundation wall (the required R-value of insulation is dependent upon location of the project based on heating degree days). The insulation shall extend downward from the top of the slab, or downward to the bottom of the slab and then horizontally in either direction, up to a minimum distance of 4 feet (total depth of insulation is dependent upon location).

Therefore, a slab that is greater than 12" below grade would not need to be entered in REScheck and would not be required to meet slab insulation requirements.

The following links offer additional information on this subject:

- [Why is Perimeter Slab Insulation Important?](#)
- [Where and How Should Perimeter Slab Insulation be Applied?](#)

What do you recommend for basement slab calculations with or without heated floor?

To calculate foundation heat losses, heat loss values for slabs were taken from Huang et al. (1988). In this methodology, the heat loss unit for below-grade foundations is in terms of linear feet of perimeter (F-factor) instead of square feet of surface area (Uo-factor). A Uo-factor is multiplied by a surface area and degree-days to obtain the total heat loss. An F-factor is multiplied by a perimeter length and degree-days to obtain the total heat loss. These F-factors are shown in Table A.34. The F-factors are given in the referenced paper for insulation both on the exterior and interior of the foundation wall. The F factors vary only slightly by insulation placement, so the average of the exterior and interior insulation placement was used. The same F-factors were used for heated and unheated slabs. Huang et al. (1988) did not present F-factors for insulation levels above R-10 for slab insulation 2-ft deep; therefore, F-factors were considered to be constant for insulation levels above R-10 for this configuration. Additionally, F factors were considered to be constant for all insulation levels above R-20, regardless of insulation depth. This assumption was deemed reasonable because little is gained by the additional insulation (above R-20, most of the heat loss occurs under and around the insulation).

In the REScheck software, slab perimeters can be insulated to any depth up to 4 ft. To calculate heat loss for any combination of insulation depth and R-value, quadratic curves were fit through the data in Table A.34. The resulting quadratic Equation (A.24) gives the F-factor as a function of insulation depth. The applicable coefficients for Equation (A.24) are given in Table A.35 and are determined by the insulation R-value. R-values range from R-0 to R-20.

Table A.34:

Slab-On-Grade Floor F-Factors

Insulation R-Value	2-ft Insulation Depth	4-ft Insulation Depth
R-0	1.043	1.041
R-5	0.804	0.744
R-10	0.767	0.684
R-15	0.767	0.654
R-20 and Above	0.767	0.636

Slab F-Factor Equation (A.24):

F-factor = intercept + coef 1 x depth + coef 2 x depth²

where depth = the distance the insulation extends downward (or downward and outward) in feet.

Table A.35:

Coefficients for Slab F-Factor Equation

R-Value	intercept	coef 1	coef 2
R-0	1.042	0.0013	-0.0004
R-1	1.042	-0.0967	0.0144
R-2	1.042	-0.1293	0.0188
R-3	1.042	-0.1459	0.0207
R-4	1.042	-0.1562	0.0217
R-5	1.042	-0.1635	0.0223
R-6	1.042	-0.1692	0.0227
R-7	1.042	-0.1739	0.0230
R-8	1.042	-0.1781	0.0233
R-9	1.042	-0.1819	0.0236
R-10	1.042	-0.1855	0.0240
R-11	1.042	-0.1836	0.0231
R-12	1.042	-0.1819	0.0222
R-13	1.042	-0.1805	0.0215
R-14	1.042	-0.1792	0.0208
R-15	1.042	-0.1780	0.0203
R-16	1.042	-0.1770	0.0197

R-17	1.042	-0.1760	0.0193
R-18	1.042	-0.1751	0.0188
R-19	1.042	-0.1743	0.0184
R-20	1.042	-0.1735	0.0180

How should I enter basement walls that have rigid exterior insulation that is from grade down, not from top of wall down?

Separate the wall into two different assemblies, the wall with no insulation and the part of the wall that has insulation. If the top part of the wall that has no insulation is >50% above grade, it would be considered an above grade wall and should be entered as an above grade wall. The insulated portion of the wall, if >50% below grade, would be entered as a basement wall.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[How do I Enter Insulated Basement Walls in REScheck?](#)

How would you enter a basement wall with outside rigid insulation that stops at grade?

When entering the depth of insulation for the basement wall, enter the depth in feet from the top plate to the grade level. Enter the insulation R-value in the Continuous Insulation column.

If I use continuous rigid insulation on the inside of the basement, do I enter this as cavity or continuous?

You would enter your insulation R-value as continuous.

Cavity insulation is insulation installed in the cavities between structural members, such as wood studs, metal framing, and Z-clips. Continuous insulation runs continuously over structural members and is typically rigid foam board. Cavity insulation is affected by thermal bridging, while continuous insulation reduces thermal bridges.

Continuous Insulation (CI)

Insulation that runs continuously over structural members and is free of significant thermal bridging; such as rigid foam insulation above the ceiling deck. It is installed on the interior, exterior, or is integral to any opaque surface of the building envelope.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[How Do I Enter Cavity and Continuous Insulation for Basement Walls in REScheck?](#)

Is rigid insulation on an interior basement wall (cmu) between furring considered continuous?

No, if the basement wall is being furred out, insulation installed between the furring would be considered cavity insulation.

Cavity insulation is insulation installed in the cavities between structural members, such as wood studs, metal framing, and Z-clips. Continuous insulation runs continuously over structural members and is typically rigid foam board. Cavity insulation is affected by thermal bridging, while continuous insulation reduces thermal bridges.

Insulation to be installed between furring or studs is entered in the Cavity R-value column. If the installed wall insulation will be continuous (such as with exterior rigid insulation or interior "draped" insulation), the insulation R-value is entered in the Continuous R-value column. A combination of insulation systems may be used. For example, installing R-13 batt insulation between the studs and R-5 rigid insulation on the exterior of the stud wall.

Is it possible for a contractor to show compliance without final grade shown on drawings?

No, one good example is a walk out basement. The code defines below grade walls as walls that are more than 50% below grade. If you don't know the final grade, then the best approach would be to assume the entire project is above grade or at grade level.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[How Do I Enter Non-Uniformly Insulated Basement Walls in REScheck?](#)

How do I calculate the depth below grade for a wall with difficult topography and before the lot is graded?

The code defines below grade walls as walls that are more than 50% below grade. If you don't know the final grade, then the best approach would be to assume the entire project is above grade or at grade level.

Can below grade insulation depth be used as a tradeoff?

In certain situations, because *REScheck* is heavily based on U factor x Area (UA, the heat loss/gain rate) calculations for each building assembly to determine the whole-building UA for the building design. The whole-building UA from a building conforming to the code requirements (the code building) is compared against the UA from the user's building design (the proposed building). If the total heat loss (represented as a UA) through the envelope of the user's building design does not exceed the total heat loss from the building conforming to the code, then the user's design passes.

Why do you get penalized when the depth of wall below grade is deeper into the ground? Isn't that opposite than it should be?

The *REScheck* UA calculations for basement walls take into account the effect of the soil surrounding the below grade walls. The larger the depth (feet) below grade the overall UA calculation is less than a below grade wall with a lesser depth (feet) below grade. The calculation takes into account the heat loss and the R-value of the soil according to the depth below grade.

How do you treat interior blanket insulation applied directly to foundation walls without studding?

The insulation would be considered continuous insulation with no thermal breaks, enter in the Continuous Insulation column.

Do you list a floor on every project? I am not sure what should be input for a basement floor.

If your basement is a walkout, you would enter the floor, at the walk out area, as slab on grade and your calculation would be the exposed portion of the slab in linear feet. The rest of the basement is entered as basement wall and not floor.

Floor components that are required to meet code are floors over unconditioned spaces and slabs on grade where the perimeter edge is exposed.

Is blanket insulation allowed for foundation walls?

Yes, blanket insulation is allowed for foundation walls, but not for use as slab insulation. You may want to consider moisture when you plan for basement insulation.

Is fire safe batt insulation that is on the entire interior face of the basement wall considered continuous insulation?

If the interior side of the basement wall is not furred out and you are draping the insulation from the top of the stem wall downward, the insulation would be considered continuous insulation. Keep in mind, the rim joist will still need to be insulated and the draped insulation is typically attached to the mud sill.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1458 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Crawlspcace

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

For a house over a crawl space, what is entered for the area and how is insulation entered?

If the crawl space is vented to the outside, the crawl would be considered an unconditioned space and the floor above the crawl would be entered in REScheck. The floor area is calculated in total square footage and the insulation R-value should be entered under the Cavity Insulation column.

For a conditioned crawl space, which is insulated and mechanically ventilated, the floor above the conditioned crawl space would not be entered in REScheck. Instead, the crawl walls would be entered by calculating the height times the length of the crawl walls and entering the appropriate depth below grade, depth below outside grade, depth of insulation from the top of the crawl wall down to the footing, and insulation R-value.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Does the Energy Code Allow an Unvented Crawlspcace?](#)

Is there any difference between the outside insulation with foam and inside with foam in crawl space insulation?

The code does not dictate whether to insulate the outside or inside of a conditioned crawl space. However, for the outside there is language requiring the rigid board insulation be protected (ie, flashing or cementitious scratch coat). REScheck treats the insulating value of both installation the same for crawl spaces.

How do you enter cantilevered floor areas?

A cantilevered floor would be entered as a floor over outside air. This floor assembly can be chosen from the drop down list of assembly types under the floor component menu.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1459 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Slabs

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Is a heated slab "heated" or is it a slab in a conditioned space?

The definition of a heated slab is a slab that is directly heated by using hydronic coils or other means within the slab itself.

Is slab edge insulation only for a walk-out situation?

No, slab on grade floors, whether a walk-out or the entire house must meet insulation requirements dependent upon location of the project.

For slabs with a top edge above finished grade or 12 inches or less below finished grade, the IRC requires the insulation R-value to be applied to the outside of the foundation or the inside of the foundation wall (the required R-value of insulation is dependent upon location of the project based on heating degree days). The insulation shall extend downward from the top of the slab, or downward to the bottom of the slab and then horizontally in either direction, up to a minimum distance of 4 feet (total depth of insulation is dependent upon location).

In Texas I am not positive that it is necessary to insulate slab on grade. However if not necessary and need to get proper energy compliance can this be performed or does this need to be consulted with building inspectors?

Most areas of Texas do not have slab on grade insulation requirements. However, even if the slab is not required to be insulated and the slab is part of the building envelope, it must be shown on the compliance report.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Why is Perimeter Slab Insulation Important?](#)

For slabs with exterior rigid insulation with a kicked out wing; there is a joint that is sometimes not supported correctly; which often breaks when back filled thus breeching the continuous insulation.

This is an application problem. The code wants to see the full R-value at the slab edge. Following this approach leaves you without a nailer for carpet tack strip. There is language in the code when slab insulation is installed between the exterior wall and the edge of the interior slab, the top edge of the insulation shall be permitted to be cut at a 45 degree (0.79 rad) angle away from the exterior wall. Insulation extending horizontally away from the building shall be protected by pavement or by a minimum of 10 inches (254 mm) of soil. However, this does tend to be a weak edge and often times can break.

Regarding slab on grade: how do you do the turned-up insulation if the slab actually sits on the foundation wall?

You need to either provide a thermal break or insulate the outside edge of the slab or trade it off with another building envelope component.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1460 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Overhangs and Orientation

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Does a covered front porch count as an overhang if there is a second floor over porch?

Yes, any permanent extension counts as an overhang. In REScheck, you will need to separate out all of your walls and input the appropriate projection factor for each window or group of windows entered in the program. Keep in mind, this option is only available in REScheck for projects in an area of < 3500 heating degree days where the mandatory requirement for the solar heat gain coefficient of the windows is 0.40 and certain codes are selected in the Code menu.

How do you calculate the U-value for projection of overhangs?

The value for the overhang is not considered a U-value. It is called a "projection factor" which can help with compliance in locations < 3500 heating degree days where the code is 1998 IECC, 2000 IECC, or 2003 IECC or in Pima, Arizona < 4000 ft or Georgia. The option exists to use orientation and enter any overhangs that exist on the project.

The projection factor enables you to characterize the shading impact of horizontal overhangs or canopies that project outward from the plane of the window. The projection factor is the ratio of the distance the overhang projects from the window surface to its height above the sill of the window it shades. Overhang Projection Factor = a (distance to edge of overhang)/b (distance to bottom of window sill).

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[What is a Projection Factor?](#)

I'm in Colorado, but I would like to enter Orientation and Projection Factor. How would I do this?

Orientation and Projection Factor are not available unless the project is in a location of < 3500 heating degree days and the code is 1998 IECC, 2000 IECC, or 2003 IECC or when Pima, Arizona < 4000 ft or Georgia. The reason these options are not available outside of the locations listed is that the program offers credit only towards a mandatory solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) of .40.

How do you handle orientation of angled walls?

The orientation option is only available in REScheck for projects in an area of < 3500 heating degree days where the mandatory requirement for the solar heat gain coefficient of the windows is .40. If this option is applicable to your project, select *Orientation* from the Options menu to enable the *Front Faces* drop list for the building and create the

Orientation column for walls, windows, doors, and basement walls. For walls, use the *Orientation* column to select the wall's orientation relative to the front of the building. To orient the right and left side of the building visualize yourself inside the building facing the front. Any windows or doors entered belonging to a wall with a set orientation will have the same orientation as the parent wall.

Front Faces represents the angle of the front face of the building relative to North. If the building front faces North, the building orientation will be 0 degrees; if the building front faces East, this will be 90 degrees and so on. Select one of the eight cardinal points in the drop list or choose *Custom*. *Custom* allows the user to specify an angle (in degrees) by rotating the building using a diagram.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1461 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Sunrooms and Additions

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

Does sunroom criteria apply to New York state code?

Yes, the sunroom requirements became effective in the 2001 IECC which NY has adopted. Therefore, if the addition meets the criteria defined in the code as a sunroom, the alternative prescriptive table can be used to show compliance. For more information on sunrooms, the latest issue of [Setting the Standard Newsletter](#) included an article on Special Code Requirements for Sunrooms and additions.

What if you have a project where you are constructing an addition to a house and a new roof on the old house what do you do?

First suggestion would be to show compliance to the addition separately. This would include the square footage of the new roof that only defines the addition area.

Second suggestion would be to show compliance for the roof as an individual component. Your location and heating degree days (HDD) will define the minimum amount of insulation that would be required in the new roof construction. For this approach, the IECC references several figures dependent upon the assembly component; again the HDD will determine the minimum U-factor of the roof assembly. For additional help on determining compliance to the roof assembly, please feel free to contact tech support at techsupport@becp.pnl.gov.

Third suggestion, if you cannot get the addition by itself to meet code (which is not uncommon due to the fact that the window wall ratio is only based upon the new two to three exterior walls of the addition that can be shown for compliance), try to show compliance for the entire house including the new addition. The new roof upgrade with the required amount of insulation might get you into compliance. For this approach, I would suggest using REScheck to run your take offs that define the building envelope.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[Entering an Addition in the REScheck Software](#)

Does a sunroom's perimeter get calculated into the exterior wall square footage of the building if the IECC tables are going to be used?

The prescriptive envelope component criteria in the 2003 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) is an alternative compliance path for sunrooms and additions to existing residential buildings and structures.

Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) measures how well a window blocks heat caused by sunlight. The SHGC is the fraction of the heat from the sun that enters through a window. SHGC is expressed as a number between 0 and 1. The lower a window's SHGC, the less solar heat it transmits.

Sunrooms and/or additions that meet the criteria defined in the 2003 IECC can show compliance by using the Prescriptive Envelope Component Criteria table below for the designated heating degree days (HDD) applicable to the location.

TABLE 1 2003 IECC/Sunrooms (Section 502.2.5)

HDD (heating degree day)	Fenestration U-factor (MAX)	Ceiling R-value (MIN)	Wall R- value (MIN)	Floor R- value (MIN)	Basement wall R- value (MIN)	Slab perimeter R-value and depth (MIN)	Crawl space wall R- value (MIN)
0 1,999	.75	R-19	R-13	R-11	R-5	R-0	R-5
2,000 3,999	.50	R-19	R-13	R-19	R-8	R-5, 2 ft.	R-10
4,000 5,999	.50	R-19	R-13	R-21	R-10	R-9, 2 ft.	R-19
6,000 8,499	.50	R-24	R-13	R-21	R-11	R-13, 4 ft.	R-20
8,500 12,999	.50	R-24	R-13	R-21	R-19	R-18, 4 ft.	R-20

Solar Heat Gain Coefficient (SHGC) of .40 mandatory for locations < 3,500 HDD

TABLE 2 2003 IECC/Additions (Section 502.2.5)

HDD (heating degree day)	Fenestration U-factor (MAX)	Ceiling R-value (MIN)	Wall R- value (MIN)	Floor R- value (MIN)	Basement wall R- value (MIN)	Slab perimeter R-value and depth (MIN)	Crawl space wall R- value (MIN)
0 1,999	.75	R-26	R-13	R-11	R-5	R-0	R-5
2,000 3,999	.50	R-30	R-13	R-19	R-8	R-5, 2 ft.	R-10
4,000 5,999	.40	R-38	R-18	R-21	R-10	R-9, 2 ft.	R-19
6,000 8,499	.35	R-49	R-21	R-21	R-11	R-13, 4 ft.	R-20
8,500 12,999	.35	R-49	R-21	R-21	R-19	R-18, 4 ft.	R-20

SHGC of .40 mandatory for locations < 3,500 HDD

The suite of REScheck software tools cannot be used to show compliance using the prescriptive criteria alternative compliance defined for sunrooms and additions in the 2003 IECC. Compliance can be shown on your building plans by verifying the criteria and minimum component insulation and maximum u-factor for fenestration have been met. Attaching the applicable table and reference to your building plans can also be used for documentation.

Does RES*check* accommodate values for isocyanurate installations?

The R-value for isocyanurate insulation is entered in RES*check* in the same manner as other insulation material.

When do existing buildings need to be brought up to code?

Existing buildings are not required to be brought up to code unless the exterior building envelope or any energy related parts or portions are being changed (such as window replacements, roof replacement, additions, lighting, service water heating, and HVAC systems).

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1462 -

REScheck Webcast Questions -- Building Envelope

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

How do you treat an unconditioned room that is optionally insulated?

A space that is considered unconditioned (not heated or cooled) would not be required to meet energy code requirements and the space would not be included as part of the building envelope for compliance, regardless of whether the space is optionally insulated.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[What is the Building Envelope?](#)

Are spaces over garage areas considered conditioned areas? What about carports?

If you have a room above a garage that is conditioned, the garage ceiling would be considered part of the conditioned building envelope (floor over unconditioned space) and would need to be insulated and sealed according to code.

Occupied living space over a carport would be required to meet the applicable energy code requirements for a conditioned space. The floor of the living space over the carport would be defined as a floor over outside air.

In Texas Gulf Coast areas, recent research indicates that it is not recommended to install a vapor retarder on the warm-in-winter side of non-vented framed ceilings, walls, and floors. Does REScheck recognize this regional difference?

REScheck will generate an Inspection Checklist based on the code selected, location, building envelope components, and mechanical information entered into the program. Vapor retarders will be listed on the Inspection Checklist if the code and project location are within areas that require vapor retarders. The energy code does have exceptions to installing vapor retarders where in construction moisture or its freezing will not damage the materials, where the county in which the building is being constructed is considered a hot and humid climate and identified as such in the climate zone maps, and where other approved means to avoid condensation in unventilated framed wall, floor, roof and ceiling cavities are provided.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[The Importance of Vapor Retarders](#)

How do we do the take off of the two family house that is three stories in

height and has two furnaces and two air conditioners?

Enter the entire exterior building envelope that would include both family dwelling units. Interior walls and floors that are between two conditioned spaces would not be included in your take offs.

For the HVAC systems, enter each unit separately in *REScheck*. However, if the efficiency of the units is above the minimum efficiencies in the code, *REScheck* will only give credit for the lower efficient unit shown.

How do you find infiltration if the house is not square? Do you just add the total feet of the walls?

Typically, a blower door test is performed to determine the rate of infiltration (air changes per hour). The code has language that defines a workman like installation of sealing measures for penetrations, voids, gaps in the building envelope.

Last Modified: 2005-07-13

Article #1466 -

REScheck Webcast Questions - Windows

This article is based on questions asked during the May REScheck Webcast as well as questions received through email. The original language of the questions and answers has been modified to make them as generic as possible while retaining the applicable specific information.

What if windows aren't chosen at time of REScheck forms being completed? Can we state a SHGC and show on front sheet under notes as being the maximum when actually chosen?

The code requires the U-factor of any glazing be from the NFRC label of the manufactured product or the default tables for maximum U-factors and SHGC must be used. The SHGC default values in the code do not meet the .40 SHGC mandatory requirement for locations with < 3500 heating degree days. Therefore, locations in areas needing to meet the mandatory .40 SHGC will need to either choose windows that will meet code prior to completing compliance or get approval from the code official if using values that are not from the default table or manufacturer label.

The following link offers additional information on this subject:

[How Do I Demonstrate Compliance with the SHGC Requirements in the IECC?](#)

Does the software account for air infiltration values for windows?

No, the software does not account for air infiltration values for windows.

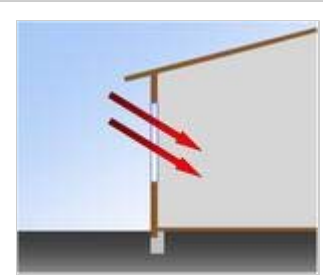
Do I have to enter each window individually or one lump area amount?

If all the windows have the same U-factor and assembly characteristics, the user can enter the total area of all windows as one item. Keep in mind, if more than one wall is entered in the program, any windows and doors that are part of the individual walls should be entered under their respective walls.

For windows, do I specify casement, picture, or double hung?

No, you only need to enter the assembly type, calculate the rough opening area of your glazing, and input the U-factor from the manufacturer label.

Last Modified: 2005-07-29



Solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) The SHGC is the fraction of incident solar radiation admitted through a window.